

OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

PARSHA INSIGHTS

KILROY WAS HERE

"And Aaron did thus." (8:3)

One of the less attractive features of modern urban living is graffiti.

Sometimes the motive is political; sometimes it is anarchic. Really, the granddaddy of all modern graffiti are the initials carved into an oak tree together with a heart pierced by an arrow — "Brian loves Brenda" and the like. Or the ubiquitous 'Kilroy' who must have been more well-traveled than Marco Polo. For from Macchu Picchu in Peru to the Acropolis in Athens, you can find engraved on those ancient stones: "Kilroy was here."

What is the underlying motivation that makes people want to carve their names in stone, and spray their opinions in day-glow paint?

Man is terrified by the thought of his own transience. By carving his name in the Acropolis, he tries to extend his life span to thousands of years. "Even though I may be dead and gone, I'm still alive as long as someone is reading this."

Graffiti is a cry of anguish in the face of our own transience.

When Aaron lit the Menorah, we are told that he did it without changing. What's so special about that? Of course, if G-d commands us to do something, we do it without changing the command.

No. When it says that Aaron didn't change, it means he didn't change *one iota* from the way G-d commanded him to do the mitzva. He did it *exactly* the way he was commanded. He resisted the natural desire to imprint his own character on what he was doing, to add something of his own personality, to immortalize himself.

Aaron was praised because he wanted to do nothing less **and nothing more** than the will of G-d.

Hashem's will — His *mitzvos* — are flawless. When Man tries to 'improve' on them, he is spraying day-glow paint over an edifice of celestial perfection.

FOR KEEP'S SAKE

"According to the word of Hashem would the Children of Israel journey..." (9:18)

When you think of man's first landing on the moon, the picture that probably comes to your mind is that of Edward 'Buzz' Aldrin with his arms slightly lifted from the sides of his body by the bulk of his space suit. Distorted by the curvature of his helmet's visor is a reflection of the photographer, Neil Armstrong. In front of him are a few footprints that represent a 'giant leap.' Behind him the blackness of space.

"The Menorah lights would live on eternally in every Jewish home..."

Whenever we want to remember something, to have a reminder of a landmark event in our lives, we take pictures to immortalize the experience. Be it a wedding or a trip down the Orinoco, we make mementos of these moments. And by making these mementos, we fix these events in the map of our lives and they become like signposts. Signposts that by telling where we have been, help us to clarify where we are supposed to be going.

When the Jewish People moved away from Sinai after the giving of the Torah, they did it in a way which was flawed. The Torah says that "And they traveled from Mount Sinai the way of three days." Rashi explains that 'the way of three days they traveled in one day.' And the Ramban says that 'they traveled from Mount Sinai with joy, like a child running out of school.'

But if you think about it, it's difficult to

understand what was flawed in their behavior. After all, a person is supposed to run to do a mitzva, and they were 'running' to Eretz Yisrael where many of the *mitzvos* were to be performed exclusively.

Weren't they merely fulfilling the command to do *mitzvos* with alacrity?

Furthermore, in this week's Parsha, the Torah teaches us that "According to the word of Hashem the Children of Israel traveled, and according to the word of Hashem, they camped." So what was their failing, since it was Hashem who commanded their movements?

The flaw was not in their actions, but in their feelings.

When something special happens in life, we want a memento to immortalize the moment. The Children of Israel, while wanting to journey as quickly as possible to Eretz Yisrael, should still have left Mount Sinai, the site of the giving of the Torah, with mixed feelings, with a little hint of melancholy that they were leaving this, the site of the Creation of the Jewish People; the fulfillment of the purpose of Creation.

They should have wanted, as it were, to have 'a photograph' — an emotional keepsake — of this, mankind's greatest giant leap.

THE BEST MAN FOR THE JOB

"And the man Moshe was more humble than anyone on the face of the earth." (12:3)

How do you get a quart into a pint pot?

If the walls of a pot are very thick, what you can put inside will be less than if the walls were thin. The thinner the walls of a container, the less they intrude into the space inside the container, and thus the greater is its capacity.

Moshe Rabbeinu was more humble than any man who lived. He made less of himself than anyone else. That doesn't mean he thought he was a *shlepper!* Moshe knew who he was. He was a king. But he understood that compared to Hashem, he was nothing. He understood

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Aaron is taught the method for kindling the Menorah. Moshe sanctifies the Levi'im to work in the Mishkan. They replace the firstborn, who were disqualified after sinning with the golden calf. After five years of training, the Levi'im serve in the Mishkan from ages 30 to 50; afterwards they engage in less strenuous work. One year after the Exodus from Egypt, Hashem commands Moshe concerning the Korban Pesach. Those ineligible for the Korban Pesach request a remedy, and thus is given the mitzvah of Pesach Sheini, which allows a "second chance" to offer the Korban Pesach one month later. Miraculous clouds, that hover near the Mishkan, signal when to travel and when to camp. Two silver trumpets summon the princes or the entire nation for announcements. The trumpets also signal travel plans,

war or festivals. The order in which the Tribes march is specified. Moshe invites his father-in-law, Yisro, to join the Bnei Yisrael, but Yisro returns to Midian. At the instigation of the Eruv Rav (the mixed multitude of Egyptians who joined the Bnei Yisrael in the Exodus) some of the people complain about the manna. Moshe protests that he is unable to govern the nation alone. Hashem tells him to select 70 elders, the first Sanhedrin, to assist him, and informs him that the people will be given meat until they will be sickened by it. Two candidates for the group of elders prophesy beyond their mandate, foretelling that Yehoshua instead of Moshe will bring the people to Canaan. Some protest, including Yehoshua, but Moshe is pleased that others have become Prophets. Hashem sends an incessant supply of quail for those who complained that they lacked meat. A plague punishes those who complained. Miriam makes a constructive remark to Aaron which also implies that Moshe is only like other Prophets. Hashem explains that Moshe's prophecy is superior to that of any other Prophet, and punishes Miriam with tzara'as, as if she had gossiped about her brother. Moshe prays for her, and the nation waits until she is cured before traveling.

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

this more clearly than anyone else who has walked this planet.

Moshe had himself like the skin of a garlic clove — virtually without substance — just the absolute minimum for him to exist in this world. **Thus, he was almost completely 'containing space.'**

It is for this reason that he was able to receive and contain the Torah in its perfection.

It's not that Moshe was just 'the best man for the job.' It's not that he was *relatively* humble — more humble than those who surrounded him. Rather, *Moshe reached an absolute and quantifiable level of humility, at which point he became able to contain the whole Torah in all its fullness and complexity.*

It therefore follows, that even today, if someone reached Moshe's level of humility, that person too could receive the Torah in all its perfection and completeness — like Moshe.

CHANUKAH GELT

"In your lighting the lights" (8:2)

What is the connection between last week's Parsha which tells of the gifts that were brought for the inauguration of the *Mishkan*, and the beginning of this week's Parsha which describes the mitzva of the Menorah?

At the end of last week's Parsha, when Aaron saw the princes of all the other tribes bringing their offerings for the inauguration of the *Mishkan*, he was

depressed. Seemingly, he had been left out.

Hashem consoled him, telling him that his lot would be greater than that of the princes, because he would prepare and light the lamps of the Menorah.

Why was lighting the Menorah greater than bringing offerings? The Midrash answers that offerings can only be brought while the *Beis Hamikdash* is standing, whereas the mitzva of the Menorah is eternal.

But the question returns — when the *Beis Hamikdash* is no longer standing, doesn't the lighting of the Menorah *also* cease?

In reality, the Menorah lives on even after the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* through Aaron's descendants, the Maccabees, who were of the priestly lineage.

The Maccabees' miraculous defeat of the Greeks at the time of Chanukah, will be commemorated *eternally* by the kindling of lights. That was the consolation that Hashem gave Aaron: The Menorah would live on eternally in every Jewish home in the lights of Chanukah.

Sources:

- **Kilroy Was Here** - The Kotzke Rebbe, Rabbi Yehoshua Bertram
- **For Keep's Sake** - Pirkei Avos 4:2, Rabbi Meir Chadash, Rabbi Menachem Zvi Goldbaum in 'Moser Derech'
- **The Best Man For The Job?** - Ruach HaChaim
- **Chanukah Gelt** - Ramban

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PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Toward which direction did the wicks of the *menorah* burn, and why?
2. From what material was the *menorah* made?
3. What was unique about the “*chatas*” offered by the *levi'im*?
4. For which two functions were the *levi'im* dedicated?
5. Why did Hashem claim the firstborn of the Jewish People as His possession?
6. Why does the Torah repeat the words “*Bnei Yisrael*” five times in verse 8:19?
7. When a *levi* reaches the age of 50, which functions may he still perform?
8. How many times did the Jewish People offer the *korban Pesach* in the *midbar*?
9. Why was the *mitzvah* of *Pesach Sheini* not commanded to Moshe earlier?
10. One might think that a certain person should bring a *Pesach* offering any time of year. Who is this certain person?
11. When were the trumpets used?
12. What date did the Jewish People camp at *Har Sinai*?
13. The tribe of Dan, who traveled last, was called “the gatherer of all the camps.” What did they gather?
14. When the Jewish People entered the Land, who took temporary possession of Jericho?
15. “The manna was like ‘*zera gad*’ (coriander seed). . . .” In what way was it like ‘*zera gad*’?
16. Moshe was commanded to choose 70 elders to help him lead the Jewish People. What happened to the elders who led the Jewish People in Egypt?
17. Whom did Moshe choose as the 70 elders?
18. What was the prophesy of Eldad and Medad?
19. What was Tziporah’s reaction when she heard that Eldad and Medad reached the level of prophecy?
20. Why did Miriam deserve that the Jewish People wait one week for her to recover?

BONUS QUESTION?

“If the sheep and cattle be slaughtered for them, will it be enough for them? If every fish in the sea be gathered for them, will it be enough for them?” (11:22) The Jewish People owned abundant livestock, and there are lots of fish in the ocean. Why, then, wouldn’t these be enough to satisfy the Jewish People’s complaints about eating manna all the time?

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

“...Eldad and Meidad are prophesying [that Moshe will die and Yehoshua will lead the people into the land...]” (11:27). Eldad and Meidad were Moses’s brothers. Moses’s parents divorced due to the Egyptian decree that the babies be cast into the Nile. Moses’s mother then married someone else and bore Eldad and Meidad.

• Yonasan ben Uziel

HAFTORAH: ZECHARIA 2:14-4:7

BIO-DEGRADATION

“For behold I will bring you my servant — the flourishing one” (3:8)

Why is the *Mashiach* referred to as the ‘flourishing one?’

Even though today it seems that all remnant of the majesty of the Royal House of David has been uprooted and has vanished into nothingness, nevertheless, the root is still living, hidden and dormant.

Immediately prior to the coming of the *Mashiach*, there will be tremendous confusion in the world. Everything will seem to have gone haywire. The natural order will be turned on its head: Age will bow to youth. Ugliness will be trumpeted as beauty, and what is beautiful will be dis-

paraged as unattractive. Barbarism will be lauded as culture. And culture will be dismissed as worthless.

The hunger of consumerism and the lust for material wealth will grow more and more, and it will find less and less to satisfy its voracity. Eventually Esav/Materialism will grow so rapacious that it will become its own angel of death. It will literally consume itself and regurgitate itself back out.

However, from this decay the line of David will sprout, **like a plant that springs forth from no more than the dirt of the ground.** There will be three wars of confusion, and then, at the appropriate moment, the *Mashiach* will appear like a majestic tree flourishing from barren ground, laden with fruit, revealed to all.

• *Malbim, Ohr Yesharim in the Haggadah Migdal Ader Hachadash*

WEEKLY DAF

ME'ILAH 5- 11

TWO VIEWS OF THE HOLY ASHES

Take a look in your *siddur* (prayer book) and you will see in the very early part of the *shacharis* morning service a chapter from the Torah (*Vayikra* 6:1) which describes the first service performed by the *kohanim* each day in the *Beis Hamikdash*. After washing his hands and feet in the special basin in the Temple courtyard, a *kohen* would take a silver shovel, go up to the altar where the coals and ashes from the consumed sacrifices were gathered, and scoop up some of the most consumed ashes which he would then place on the floor next to the altar ramp.

This ritualistic “lifting of the ashes” was followed by an assault upon the large pile of remaining ashes by his fellow *kohanim*. They raked and shoveled these ashes into the center of the altar where they formed a dome similar to the shape of an apple. When this “apple” grew to such a size that it interfered with the activities of the *kohanim* it would be removed by the *kohanim*.

What is the status of these ashes in the “apple”? If someone takes some of them for private use is he guilty of *me'ilah* because he has misappropriated sacred property, or do we view these ashes as something whose mitzvah has already been completed and therefore no longer subject to the ban of *me'ilah*?

If he takes these ashes from the “apple” before the ritualistic lifting of the ashes the ban of *me'ilah* certainly applies because that mitzvah has still not been performed. But if this ritual has been

completed and all that is left to do with the remaining ashes is to remove them to somewhere “outside the camp” there are two ways of viewing these ashes. The Sage Rav views this subsequent removal of the ashes not as a religious service but simply as a practical elimination of an impediment. Since all *mitzvos* have already been done with these ashes they no longer have a sacred status subject to the laws of *me'ilah*. Rabbi Yochanan takes an opposing view. Since the *kohanim* who remove these ashes must wear the special garments of a *kohen*, albeit less expensive ones than for other services because of the less esthetic nature of this action, we look at these ashes as still maintaining a sacred status because there is still a mitzvah to be done with them. *Me'ilah*, therefore, still applies.

• *Me'ilah* 9a

MYSTERY OF THE HOLY WINE

Wine which was poured as a *nesachim* libation on the altar as an accompaniment to a sacrifice is considered sacred and subject to the laws of *me'ilah* until it enters the ducts on the altar; from then on *me'ilah* no longer applies.

This rule stated in our Mishnah recalls a dispute in *Mesechta Sukkah* (49a) about the nature of these ducts into which the wine libations were poured. Several sages contend that these ducts went from the altar all the way to the watery depths of the universe. Rabbi Elazar bar Tzadok's opinion is that they ended at the internal base of the altar and once

every 70 years some young *kohanim* would climb down a narrow passageway between the altar and the ramp leading to it and retrieve the wine which had congealed like pressed figs. They would then burn this congealed wine in the Sanctuary because it still had a sacred status.

Both of these views present a problem in regard to understanding our Mishnah. The first view presents a practical challenge — if the wine went all the way down to the depths, what need is there to mention that they are not subject to *me'ilah* after entering the ducts? While this is not a problem for Rabbi Elazar's approach, since the wine was retrievable, there is a different challenge — why is this wine not subject to *me'ilah* if it is considered sacred enough to require burning within a sacred area?

The resolution which is offered for both of these problems, both here in our Gemara and also in *Mesechta Sukkah*, is that our Mishnah deals with a case where the *kohen* placed his hand in the duct and caught the wine before it went all the way down. In such an event there is no longer a problem for the first approach as to how the wine is still around for discussion as to whether *me'ilah* applies. Rabbi Elazar's explanation is that once the wine has entered the ducts its mitzvah has been complete so that *me'ilah* no longer applies. Should the wine reach the base of the altar, however, it is once again sanctified by the contact with the Temple floor and requires burning in a sacred place. Since it was caught before that it has no sanctity and is exempt from the laws of *me'ilah*.

• *Me'ilah* 11b

FATHERLY ADVICE

Tidbits From the 'Ethics of the Fathers' Traditionally Studied on Summer Shabbatot

Anyone who repeats something he heard from someone else and says it in his name brings a redemption to the world, as we see that the redemption of the Purim miracle came as a result of Queen Esther telling the king, in the name of Mordechai (Esther 2:22) about the plot to assassinate him. (Avos 6:6)

Mordechai sanctified the Name of Hashem by demonstrating the loyalty of a Jew to his ruler. The plotters, Bigsan and Seresh, were influential people and there was a danger that if the fickle king would pardon them they would avenge themselves upon him. It is the will of Heaven that the

source of such exemplary behavior or wisdom be publicized so that people will seek to learn from him. In the case of Mordechai and Esther the result was the physical redemption from the genocidal plot of Haman and the spiritual redemption of Jews coming closer to their Father in Heaven.

ASK the RABBI

FOR EYES

Barbara Beran
of Rockville, Maryland
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wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Please explain why it is said that 'an eye for an eye' refers to monetary recompense for an injury. I have heard that it has something to do with the letter ayin - but I do not know the link.

Dear Barbara Beran,

The phrase 'an eye for an eye' is one of the most well known yet misunderstood in the entire Torah.

Obviously, an eye is of inestimable value. You can never replace it or put a price on it. Certainly, blinding the offender will do nothing to help the victim.

However, an eye does indeed have a monetary aspect to it. Let's say, for example, that the victim is a football player who earns a million dollars a year. After losing an eye, he can no longer play big-league ball. His best job prospect is coaching a minor-league team, which pays an average salary. Losing his eye cost him millions of dollars in actual financial loss.

This financial loss is what the Torah refers to when it says "an eye to replace an eye." The eye can't be replaced, but at least the victim can reclaim the financial loss caused by the loss of his eye.

In addition to the financial value, the Torah requires four types of

punitive damages: The offender must recompense the victim for pain, embarrassment, unemployment, and medical expenses.

But how do we know that 'an eye for an eye' is not literal? First of all, 'an eye for an eye' is a bad translation. The correct translation is 'an eye to replace an eye.' The word 'replace' connotes payment rather than revenge.

But to understand any verse properly, you need to look at the context.

The verses before and after this verse describe someone who accidentally kills another person's animal: "Whoever kills an animal must pay for it — a soul to replace a soul." (Leviticus 24:18) Obviously, the term "a soul to replace a soul" means payment. We don't kill the person, or his animal, because he killed an animal! It says explicitly 'he must pay for it.' Therefore, it's logical that 'an eye to replace an eye' also means payment. To say otherwise is to take the verse out of context.

Furthermore, if the verse were literal, what would happen if a blind person poked out someone's eye? Would he be exempt? And what if a person with only one eye poked the eye of someone with two eyes, or the other way around?

Above all, taking out someone's eye is dangerous and could easily cause his death. Would the Torah require that an offender be put at risk of death, especially in the case where his offense was accidental?

Probably the strongest indication that this verse is not literal is the very fact the Jewish people say so. Our

tradition is a faithful, unbroken chain dating back to Sinai. (The evidence for this is a topic for another discussion.) In all Jewish history there is absolutely no record of this verse ever having been implemented literally. The very idea is abhorrent to any Jew.

The Vilna Gaon discovered an ingenious clue, hinting that "an eye to replace an eye" refers to paying money. Very literally, the verse reads 'an eye **under** an eye.' Take the three letters 'under' the three letters of the word 'eye' in the Hebrew alphabet. They spell 'kesef' — money! [Eye in Hebrew is 'ayin' — spelled 'ayin yud nun.' The letters immediately after ('under') each of these letters are 'Feh Kaf Samech.' ('peh' and 'feh' are the same in the Torah) These letters spell 'kesef' — money!]

Sources:

- Leviticus 24:18-21
- Talmud, Tractate Baba Kama 83b
- Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, Exodus 23

YIDDLE RIDDLE

Judith Subar

<abubbe@aol.com> wrote:

We were at our synagogue dinner and someone asked the following Yiddle Riddle: What blessing can't you say if you are on the moon?

Answer next week...

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PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 8:2 - They leaned toward the middle wick so people would not say Hashem needed the *menorah* for its light.
2. 8:4 - Solid gold.
3. 8:8 - It was not eaten by the *kohanim*.
4. 8:16 - For carrying the sacred articles of the *Mishkan* and for singing in the *Mishkan*.
5. 8:17 - Because in Egypt He spared them during *makas bechoros*.
6. 8:19 - To show Hashem's love for them, their name was repeated five times corresponding to the five Books of the Torah.
7. 8:25 - He may close the gates of the courtyard of the *Mishkan* and *Beis Hamikdash*, may sing during the *avoda*, and may load the wagons when the *Mishkan* is to be transported.
8. 9:1 - Only once.
9. 9:7 - To reward those who asked about it. Hashem wanted them to be the catalyst for the teaching of this *mitzvah*.
10. 9:14 - A convert.
11. 10:2-7 - They were used to gather the Jewish People, to gather the *nesi'im*, to signal the beginning of a move of the camp, and to accompany the offering of certain communal *korbanos*.
12. 10:11 - *Rosh Chodesh Sivan*.
13. 10:25 - They gathered and returned anything lost by people from the other tribes.
14. 10:32 - The children of Yisro.
15. 11:7 - It was round.
16. 11:16 - They were consumed in the fire at *Taverah* (11:3).
17. 11:16 - People who were supervisors in Egypt and, at personal risk, had shown compassion for their brethren.
18. 11:28 - "Moshe will die and Yehoshua will lead the Jewish People into the Land."
19. 12:1 - She said, "Woe to their wives! If they become prophets, they will separate from their wives the same way my husband separated from me."
20. 12:15 - Because when Moshe was cast into the river, Miriam waited one hour to see what would happen to him.

BONUS ANSWER!

The Jewish People didn't complain about the *amount* of food they received; rather, they complained about the *taste*. Moshe thought: "No matter how *much* food I give them, someone is bound to complain about the taste. If I give them all the sheep and cattle, someone is bound to say 'I want deer meat...'"

• *Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh*

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

8:2	RAMBAN Preview of <i>Chanukah</i>	11:1	Sin of Complainers		
9:1	<i>Korban Pesach</i> in the <i>Midbar</i>	11:5	Fish and Vegetables in Egypt	384	Significance of Trumpets
9:10	<i>Pesach Sheini</i>	11:6	Complaints about Manna		
9:14	<i>Pesach</i> of the <i>Ger</i>	11:16	Significance of Number 70		
10:29	Yisro's Choice			9:1	SFORNO The Four Merits
10:35	Flight from Sinai	380	SEFER HACHINUCH <i>Pesach Sheini</i>	11:22	Never Satisfied

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